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WOMANHOOD AT THE CROSS-ROADS

HON. MRS. GELL

S.P.C.K.

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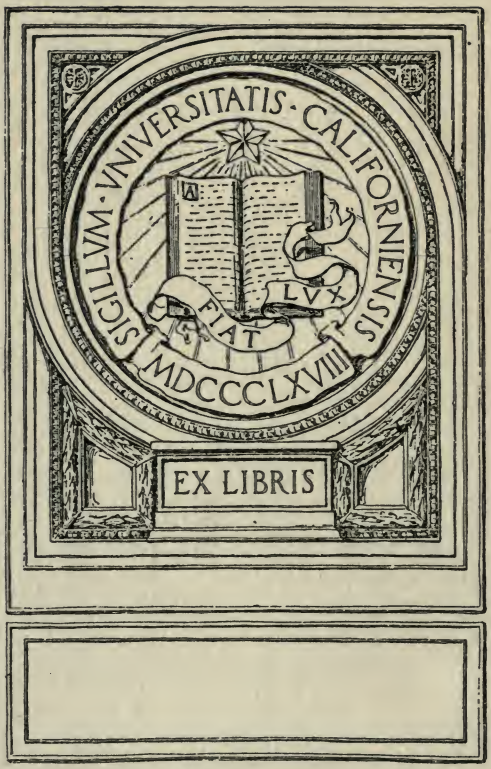
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WOMANHOOD AT THE CROSS-ROADS

THIS is one of a series written mainly by present or past Church of England Chaplains to the Forces, and edited by the Rev. F. B. Macnutt, formerly S.C.F., Editor of 'The Church in the Furnace.'

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WOMANHOOD AT THE CROSS-ROADS

By the Hon. Mrs. GELL, Author of 'The Cloud of Witness,' 'The Happy Warrior,' 'The Empire's Destiny,' etc. etc.

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FOREWORD

READERS of 'Womanhood at the Cross-Roads' will realise that it is largely addressed to the problems confronting the more educated section of society, not because these problems are the most important, but because they have apparently received less attention than those primarily concerning the wage-earning section of the community. There is among the more leisured classes an immense reserve of force, hitherto very imperfectly utilised for the benefit of the body politic. In the crisis of our fate, our country needs every gift of daughters as well as sons, if wise solutions are to be reached; and those to whom wealth of opportunity has given balanced judgment, organising power, above all a lofty vision, are not justified in hoarding their treasures for the delectation of a narrow circle, but are bound to seek every means of rendering them available for the country as a whole. The capacity for leadership is often strongest in sensitive souls which shrink from anything approaching publicity. The degree of vision is the measure of responsibility.

Time was I shrank from what was right
From fear of what was wrong.
I would not brave the sacred fight
Because the foe was strong.

But now I cast that finer sense
And surer shame aside,
Such dread of sin was indolence,
Such aim at Heaven was pride.

So when my Saviour calls, I rise
And calmly do my best,
Leaving to Him with silent eyes
Of hope and fear the rest.

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'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!'

'Hear ye not the voices, ringing down the ages,
Echoing still the message, though their task be done—
Voices born of heroes, monarchs, poets, sages,
Yearning still to share the wisdom they had won?

'Listen! Thronging round you, deafening with their clamour,
Fashion-tyrants mock at your vaunt of self-control;
Wake!—Delusive visions, fraught with poison glamour,
Daze your eyes to blindness, while they paralyse your soul.

'Yet the Cloud of Witness solemnly advances,
Widening as each clarion voice is hushed in death below;
Yet the Heavenly Vision gleams on raptured glances,
Prompt through changing vesture their changeless Lord to know.'

CHAPTER I: WHITHER?

'I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.'

THE altered outlook of women on life as a result of the War is fraught with possibilities so vital to the future of our country, that it is important the position should be squarely faced, if disaster is to be avoided. At present we are pursuing a policy of drift. Opinions are crystallising fast. The whole attitude of Womanhood is changing; and apparently leaders are making little attempt to safeguard the heritage of the past. In every direction the spirit of opportunism is rife.

We are a prey to a peculiarly acute form of individualism. Self-expression is considered to be of primary importance. The body politic has become a secondary consideration, and under the altered conditions, which, rightly manipulated, might be productive of untold good, there is danger that the fundamental principles on which our country's greatness is founded will suffer eclipse.

Women have tasted the sweets of freedom. They have discovered their economic value. Their administrative ability, hitherto absorbed in domestic activities, where it was largely unrecognised, has been appreciatively utilised in the service of the State. Physically, whether on the land or in munitions and the like, they have proved equal to undertaking laborious tasks hitherto considered beyond their powers; and the net result is that many of them are determined never to go back to the pre-war conditions.

As usual, the swing of the pendulum is excessive, and the whole situation needs wise and judicious con-

sideration, so that the fine old tradition of the past, in which British womanhood has played so noble a part, may be fitly wedded to the new age so full of inspiring possibilities. Subversive spirits would persuade us that a breach of continuity is inevitable. The very reverse is the case. We relinquish angels, that archangels may come in. But the essential nature of both is the same. The new age of womanhood should not be diverse, but rather the child grown to full stature, uplifted, glorified. Its ascent should not be marred by squalid sex-antagonism or egotistical self-seeking.

The spirit of the Eternal Mother in woman should be brought to bear on the whole gamut of national life, and should not be relinquished when dealing with the larger family of the State. It would not conduce to civic welfare if we introduced what would practically be a neuter sex, viz. a class of women who abjured domestic life in favour of public activities. But this is a contingency to be reckoned with. Feminine ambition has been aroused, and there is a very real danger that the ablest among us—the very women whose children should be an asset to the State—may shun marriage in order to devote themselves unreservedly to causes in which they believe they may render more direct service to their country.

This tendency is not confined to one class, but pervades society from highest to lowest. The educated woman in many cases no longer regards the wise governance of a household, the nurture and guidance of the rising generation, the hundred and one beneficent and gracious activities which together make up the English home at its best, as affording a sphere commensurate with her talents. If she is already married, she does not aim at a large family, and her daughters, finding countless outlets for their budding energies, are apt either to postpone marriage

indefinitely, or to enter into one of those semi-detached unions which cannot be said to deserve the name of matrimony in the true sense of the word.

Meanwhile her respectable wage-earning sister, having adopted a higher standard of comfort and refinement, is unwilling to jeopardise it through a houseful of children. She knows her strength will not suffice for all the countless needs of the big families of the past, if the new level is to be maintained ; and she hankers after time for something beyond the incessant cooking, washing, and mending which a yearly baby in arms means. Often she does not realise that new life is sacred from its first inception. Why is not specific teaching on this subject given to brides before our Church solemnises Holy Matrimony ? The result is the same as with her more educated sister : she ceases to regard motherhood as the noblest vocation a woman can fulfil. Year by year the birth statistics fall. Families dwindle, and too frequently it is only among the least desirable elements of the population that babies are regarded as a matter of course, and not merely incidental, to be, or not to be, at will.

All thinking people recognise the gravity of this state of affairs. No student of history can overlook the fact that a falling birth-rate is a sure sign of decadence in a nation. It has been the precursor of the fall of all the great empires of the past. It brings its own Nemesis. We know how nearly it proved the undoing of our great ally, France. But for our ability to provide the necessary men, Germany, with her annual increase of population, would have completely overwhelmed her stationary neighbour. Race-suicide has now shown its ghastly face in our midst, and if our great Empire is not to share the terrible fate of Greece and Rome, we must arrest its inroads without delay, and build up an enlightened public

opinion to counteract the baneful influences of Malthusian advocates.

We need also to arrive at a truer estimate of values as regards the service which women can render to their country. Their contributions, whether in politics, administration, literature, or religion, are of immense value, but they pale into insignificance before the achievement of the Christian wife, who in holy wedlock gives birth to immortal souls and devotes the best years of her life to bringing them up to carry on the highest traditions of the race! Yet it is this achievement which in the past has too often been belittled and scorned. Advanced women have looked down on motherhood and even regarded a large family as positively indelicate and a slur on the dignity of womanhood, while every difficulty is placed in the way of parents with a group of children. Many landlords absolutely decline to take them as tenants for unfurnished houses, and for furnished ones the advertisement often includes 'no children *or dogs*.' This is a pendant to that of employers desiring 'married servants *without encumbrances*.'

The national conscience is at present dormant on this point, so vital to the nation's very existence. The policy is inconceivably short-sighted, for, as our King has well said, 'The strength of our nation is in the homes of its people.' Everything should be done to facilitate the parents' task not only among the wage-earners, but also among the professional classes, whose sons and daughters form the very backbone of the nation both in the Mother Country and overseas. The struggle for them at this time is heartrending. Many wage-earners are better off than they have ever been before; there is no proportionate increase for clergy, doctors, clerks, writers, to counterbalance the great rise in the cost of

living. For them a large family (unless they happen to possess independent means) too often spells grinding poverty or, worse still, debt. They suffer in silence, and because they do not clamour, their cause remains practically unchampioned. It is short-sighted policy, from the patriotic point of view, to leave their wrongs unredressed, for these professional classes have indeed deserved well of their country. In every service, the Church, the Army, the Navy, the Civil Service, above all in the far corners of the Empire, their sons and daughters are to be found holding the fort for God and for Britain. They form an absolutely invaluable asset of uprightness and stability, and were their numbers in the future to be largely diminished by the force of cruel necessity, the results to the Empire would be disastrous.

Other nations rate them at their true value and envy us the apparently inexhaustible supply of clean-living officials with a genius for managing men of alien race, impervious to bribes and with a sense of fairness which commands universal respect, and often affection.

The home life of our country is threatened in a thousand ways. The War loosened home bonds in many directions. The educated mother undertook patriotic activities often involving the sacrifice of domesticity; while among the wage-earners the absence of the husband and father and consequent loneliness frequently drove the wife to seek distraction and employment outside the home. The result in both cases is the same. The girls just emerging from childhood in 1914 have grown up without the home ideals of their predecessors. They have found their interests elsewhere. Their ambition has been stimulated, and the question 'Will the women go back?' is being debated, often with scant regard for the welfare of the nation, and a general assumption that woman is free to

decide her future in her own interest alone, not in that of the race.

That blessed word 'self-determination,' in the name of which the most glaring injustices may be perpetrated, is the watchword of a certain section, and when applied to the sanctities of human relations is peculiarly disastrous—so true is it that 'No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself.' The wife and mother of an only child who ordains for him loneliness though 'God setteth the solitary in families,' may be gloriously 'self-determined,' but what of her tyranny over the lives of husband and child? Similarly, the woman who refuses to use her powers for home-making because public life brings more definite renown, has surely, in Ruskin's phrase, 'grasped at authority in the least things while she abdicates in the greater.'

It is natural that under the new circumstances women should claim to be the arbiters of their own fate; but such a claim carries with it an overwhelming responsibility. If it be true that we cannot, if we would, cast off that responsibility on other shoulders—'No man may redeem his brother or make agreement with God for him'—it is no less true that if we fail to take account of the claims from other lives entwined with ours, we may defraud them of their rights in selfish pursuit of our own.

And is it so sure that 'self-determination,' when it runs counter to the leading of God as expressed in the circumstances wherein we are placed, really achieves the highest of which we are capable?

A man's best things lie nearest him,
  Are close about his feet;
It is the distant and the far
  Which we are sick to greet.

The problem of proportion is not an easy one. The question is not one of private preference, but of what is fundamentally best for the common weal. Women stand at the parting of the ways. It seems tolerably certain that with the political power conferred by the vote there will shortly be few positions hitherto held by men which will not be thrown open to them. They will be theirs to take or leave. Is it desirable that an increasing number of our ablest should be withdrawn from family life and that the destinies of our country should be largely shaped by those who have avoided its responsibilities ?

It must be borne in mind that 'the neuter sex' frequently by no means represents the views of the wives and mothers of our country. Its aims and aspirations tend more and more to communise life, in the interest of what they consider to be good organisation. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to the moderate section, whose motto is 'Evolution, not Revolution.' But the extremists are very powerful, and should they gain the upper hand, family life would be swept away, children would be nationalised, and the home life on which, since the days of our Saxon forefathers, the greatness of our country has been built up, would become a thing of the past.

There is a fallacy that the genius of Britain is unalterable—that it is inherent in the race and will endure whatever else changes. There is no foundation for such a belief. The genius of Britain, as we know it, is the outcome of centuries of patient, duteous obedience to a higher law. Not self-determination, but, as Tennyson finely has it :

> Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> All these lead life alone to sovereign power.

These are the very basis of national character, on which our vaunted freedom is founded, and if for these tried and

tested qualities self-expression is to be substituted, the liberty of the chosen few will be purchased only at the expense of the cruel slavery of the many. To take an extreme case: self-expression for the murderer or the thief means untold terror and misery for thousands of their fellow-creatures; and in the social and religious spheres alike the New Testament paradox must be reconciled: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' 'Every man shall bear his own burden.'

Many among us believe that hitherto the special gifts of womanhood have been quite inadequately used in the service of the community outside home life. We are now inclined to rush to the other extreme, and in the exhilaration of newly awakened powers to assume that philanthropic and political activities of all kinds constitute the greatest, the most fruitful contribution women can render to the common weal.

There is some justification for this assumption, for we have certainly suffered woefully in the past from lack of foresight and attention to detail, the very qualities which women are specially fitted to supply. But it would be short-sighted policy indeed to perfect the State at the expense of the home; and it is greatly to be desired that our leading women should seriously consider how home-making may be elevated into a profession—so that those who look forward to marriage may come to its high and holy functions really prepared for the inspiring possibilities which surround the founding and guidance of a home. It is to be remembered that here is pre-eminently woman's kingdom. This is her undisputed sphere. Here she may work out ideals which, like the apostle's converts, will become living 'epistles, written in hearts, known and read of all men.'

It does not redound to our credit that, day by day,

year by year, thousands of young women are entering on the most sacred and important of human (may we not say also of divine ?) possibilities without the haziest notion of even the material part of home-making, such as is comprised in the conduct of a house, food values, economic proportions, and the like. And when it comes to the spiritual side, the deficiency is even more marked. Some are quite unaware that there is a spiritual side to marriage, and as for the finer influences which should emanate from the wife and mother, making of the home a real centre both for husband and children, they have never been taught to develop what is frequently latent within them ; the outcome being a roof with four walls used by the family for eating and sleeping, but in no real sense a home.

It is true that the very best training for a home-maker is the practical training of a well-ordered home. But, as indicated above, this, during the five years of war, has been largely missed even in the homes fitted to provide it. The result is we have a generation growing up with no personal experience of home ideals, and it is they who, it is to be feared, often too lightly enter on a relation the responsibilities of which they are quite unprepared to fulfil, and then seek relief in the divorce court, thus pulling down the whole institution of marriage.

It is advisable to consider whether the present education given to girls in elementary, secondary, high schools, and at home is of the kind which will enable them to employ their talents in the best interests of the common weal. What is the ideal set before them ? As a rule, in the nature of things, the able women who preside over educational institutions are unmarried. The result is that unconsciously the bias is rather towards so-called professions than towards what has so far not been regarded in the light of a profession—the home. Girls

are great hero-worshippers. They naturally admire the gifted teachers to whom they owe so much, and in the absence of any incentive in the domestic direction, insensibly are fired with ambition to emulate them.

Then, too, the fact that in all schools tangible honours are, for the most part, only to be achieved on the intellectual or technical side, naturally inclines teachers to prepare their pupils for examinations which will redound to the credit of the school. So far the most exemplary home life and management on the part of a scholar does not bring specific recognition to her *alma mater*, and though domestic science is now taught, it is apt to be regarded rather as an extra, whereas it should be just as much a fundamental of a girl's education as reading, writing, or arithmetic.

It should not pass the wit of woman to devise a course embracing home-making in all its aspects, for which honours could be conferred, so that it should not be penalised.

Expert knowledge is certainly not less necessary to the successful conduct of a family than in the public service. Yet how few brides know the ABC of domestic hygiene or the management of babies! It is fatal to leave this knowledge to be acquired till after marriage, and most unfair on helpless infants that they should form a field of experiments for ignorant mothers. The essentials of both subjects should be part of every girl's education; for whether she marries or no, there are few women on whom sooner or later the care of children does not devolve, and if women were conscious of competence in this direction there would be much less distaste for wifehood and motherhood.

It is vitally important that the wisest among us should consider these questions in all their bearings, and should

form public opinion in the right direction. In a recent publication by a girl writer, a strong case is made out for educated married women pursuing professions. She alleges that 'under certain conditions the home is more likely to benefit than suffer because the wife *earns her living elsewhere*.' It is difficult to visualise the kind of home in which this would be the case. Professions carried on away from a wife's own house surely strike at the root of home life. In the case of wage-earners we have seen the disastrous results during the War. And the educated woman who leaves children and household to fend for themselves while she adds to her income has surely a strange appreciation of relative values. The same objection does not lie against those professions which can be carried on in the home, such as literature, art, market gardening, fruit-growing, and that least recognised but most important though unpaid profession of the clergyman's wife. The governance of a home may be, and has been, successfully carried on in conjunction with most fruitful work in such directions; but no occupation which means absence for the greater part of every day is consistent with genuine home life. There is a significant phrase used by the authoress, which we should do well to ponder. '*Provided there are no infant children*, there is no reason why the wife should not do some kind of productive work.' And as it is assumed that the woman is to decide what work she shall do, whether she be married or single, in the unequal competition between the profession and possible babies, it is to be feared that the weaker will go to the wall.

Yet from time immemorial brave and public-spirited sons, pure and inspiring daughters, have been the richest diadem with which any woman's brow can be encircled. And such results do not eventuate spontaneously. They

are the product not of an absentee mother, who regards the rearing and guidance of a family as a secondary consideration, but of the abiding presence of an 'angel in the house,' a centre for all, to whom the welfare and development of each little one is a constant study, who regards each expanding life as infinitely precious, and whose highest ambition it is so to build up their characters that they may be worthy servants of God and their country and a crown to both parents in their old age.

Such a woman will, as the children grow up and cease to need her care, be invaluable on the many religious and philanthropic organisations to whom her ripe judgment and practical experience will bring the balance and foresight so essential to success. This will be a real contribution to the service of the country. For it is not advisable in the interests of the rising generation that these should be wholly conducted by spinsters or widows. The fact that a wife has the advantage of discussing the many new problems which arise with her husband and adjusting her angle of vision to his, makes for sane judgment and a generous attitude towards those who differ. The masculine and feminine points of view are mutually complementary, and their combination reaches conclusions nearer perfection than either can attain to singly.

To sum up. We cannot rate the importance of home life too high. Nothing must interfere with the primary duty and privilege of women to aid in the fashioning of immortal souls; and this privilege does not terminate with infancy, but continues to hold the field till each child has reached adolescence and is launched in the world. But subject to this primary claim, the spiritual quality of motherhood in womanhood should be placed at the service of the State in every direction.

The payment for such service will be the least part of the considerations involved. Women desire public work in order that they may help their day and generation. They believe that in the State as in the family, ' It is not good for man to be alone.' They see that, single-handed in the past, man has been unable to cope with a tithe of the urgent problems on which the welfare, possibly the very existence, of our country depends. In no spirit of competition, but as true and loyal helpmeets, they feel it is right they should take their share of the burden.

In the general unrest, there has been an attempt on the part of a small section to add to all the other wars that most futile and unnatural of conflicts, a sex-war. The vast majority, including the best men and the best women, will have none of it. These terrible years have left both with a greater reverence and admiration for the fine qualities displayed in an overwhelming crisis by the other sex. They realise that hand in hand, each supplementing the other, there is nothing they cannot accomplish. We have difficult times before us, we have also unexampled opportunity. Only in closest communion with the Divine can we find the destined solution :

Drop Thy still dews of quietness
  Till all our strivings cease ;
Take from our souls the storm and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
  The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
  Thy coolness and Thy balm ;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire,
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire
  O still small voice of calm.

CHAPTER II: WOMANHOOD AS AN ECONOMIC FORCE

'Provide things honest in the sight of all men.'

'What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and her neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me for I have found the piece which I had lost!'

'Repentance, courage, sacrifice,
Unceasing prayer we freely give;
Yet these alone will not suffice
To bid our far-flung Empire "Live!"
Vainly shall we have yielded all,
Spurning our Land's most urgent call.

'Not ours th' heroic battle-field—
Yet none the less a sacred trust
Is ours, and should we flinch or yield
This realm were humbled to the dust—
For great ideals count nothing small:
Thrift is for us our country's call.'

THE advent of women in large numbers to spheres hitherto occupied by men is raising economic questions of vital importance to the whole community. Many of those who took war work as substitutes for men at the Front have proved admirably adapted to their tasks, and having tasted the joy of work, are by no means anxious to be superseded. Moreover, a new conscience has developed among the more leisured classes as regards the obligation of definite service in some form towards the common

weal. Young girls are no longer content, when their education is completed, to spend some years frolicking and dancing. They feel that these enjoyments, however natural to youth, are only justified if they form the relaxation from substantial work of some kind. They see the girls who laboured side by side with them in hospitals, canteens, munitions, and the like, now the War is over, returning to their task of earning their daily bread, and their inner consciousness tells them that they have no right to go back to the ineffectiveness of the past. They ask themselves, 'What is all our education worth if it does not render us capable of "doing our bit" in some form or another?' and they have discovered, somewhat to their surprise, that there is infinitely more zest about the dance or theatre-party which follows on work accomplished and comes as the relaxation, not as the business of life, than in the old times when pleasure was pursued from late breakfast one day till dawn of the next.

The new attitude opens up infinite possibilities, but it bristles with problems, foremost amongst them being the question: 'Is it advisable or no, in the interests of the race, that woman should be economically independent?' The power of the purse is a very potent force, and was certainly responsible for many most difficult and complex situations during the War. Amongst the wage-earners the disastrous incidents of light conduct, and worse, on the part of quite young girls were directly traceable to high wages, which rendered them independent of parental control; and it appears to be recognised that once a girl, however immature, earns enough to support herself, the mother has no further right to interfere in her comings and goings, the company she keeps, or the places she frequents.

The same thing holds good in the leisured classes where a girl is entitled to an income of her own on attaining her majority. She does not necessarily even wait for her twenty-first birthday, being perfectly aware that it is possible to raise money upon expectations—and in her case the certainty of independence is possibly more dangerous than in that of her humbler sister, because the latter has at any rate the chastening knowledge that independence is conditional on her personal exertions.

How far such economic independence is salutary in any class until years of discretion have been reached, apart from corresponding responsibilities, is open to question. The recent enactments fixing minimum wages, by which a mere lad receives the same remuneration as the father of a family, obviously do not make for contentment. They tend to foster habits and a scale of living which must be lowered when the lad marries and has other mouths to fill. They place him in the same position as an undergraduate with an income of £600 a year at the University who is then richer than he will ever be again, whatever his future prospects, and is often deterred from ever making a mark in life by the possession of a fatal though moderate competence.

It will be argued by feminists that, on grounds of justice, equal wage for equal work, regardless of sex, is the only fair solution. But it is important, before subscribing to a change which will revolutionise society, to rise above the merely sordid aspect of the case and consider its influence on the future of family life, which forms the basis of both stability and prosperity. The disquieting truth which emerges is apparently this: If the remuneration of men and women is to be the same, one of two things will happen—either the scales will be heavily weighted against marriage, entailing as it would the halving of the

joint income, or the woman would enter upon it with the deliberate intention of continuing her profession, whether it were compatible with children or no.

It is necessary to face matters squarely, not to pursue a policy of drift, because the direction in which we are tending has so far hardly been realised, and through judicious foresight possibly a way out may be found. For it is evident that if our country is to hold her own amid the vigorous competition for the world's trade, every economic force she can bring into the field is needed —only it must be persistently borne in mind that the greatest economic force of all which woman can contribute to the service of the country is a healthy, God-fearing, educated population; and unless she looks to this point, and regards it as of paramount importance, all the financiers and economists in the world cannot enable Britain to retain a foremost place.

The problem then before us is, how to utilise woman's undoubted administrative and economic gifts to the full without drawing her off from her primary responsibility.

These feminine qualities have long been recognised by our clever allies in France. The French woman of business is a great factor in their national life. Some well-known commercial undertakings are managed, and most ably managed, by women, and apparently there is little of the jealousy of such management which often crops up in a very acute form among ourselves. The advantage to the State of using such abilities is beyond question—for it liberates some man possibly for activities unsuited to feminine powers. But, before we decide to follow in their train, it would be well to endeavour to ascertain whether there is not a definite connection between these attractive openings and the dwindling population which gives French thinkers and statesmen so much anxiety,

and if, as seems probable, the two are intimately connected, we should be foolish indeed not to endeavour to avoid the evils which they are laboriously striving to remedy.

It is certain that unless in every direction the community co-operates to facilitate marriage we shall have the same disasters to deplore, for already the position is gravely anxious and requires statesmanlike treatment if it is not to develop.

It is strange that this has been so little recognised that, far from being subsidised, marriage, as distinct from irregular unions, is actually penalised by taxation. Families are assessed on the joint income of husband and wife, regardless of the fact that not only does their private expenditure remain the same as before marriage, but in addition, in the majority of the cases, they have a smaller or larger number of children to provide for, with no funds of their own; and though it is true that recently an allowance has been made by which a small reduction on the assessment is permitted for each child, this only applies to incomes below a certain figure, and does not in any way meet the extra expense involved. It is almost incredible that in the Indian Army everything is done to deter married officers from increasing their families. The birth of a child, always involving as it does the expense of nurse and doctor, not to speak of many other incidentals, is the moment chosen for actually decreasing his pay by the sum of £15 for a boy, £24 for a girl,[1] in order to lay the foundation for a pension fund for the new-born babe. Parents have literally to ask themselves: 'Shall we be able to afford this sum when the time comes?'

Yet no body of men has given to the service of the

[1] The exact sum varies with the value of the rupee, and is exclusive of a subsequent monthly subscription for the same purpose.

Empire a finer or more loyal supply of citizens than the Army and Navy. It is for the welfare of the common weal that this supply should be increased, not diminished, in the future, for to it we owe our ability to hold our own in the far corners of the earth. The service families start with special qualifications for Empire-building; they have been unconsciously trained to it from infancy. They know the ropes, and, in the interests of the future, it should be made economically possible for such families, whether in India or in England, in the Army, the Navy, the Civil Service, or the Ministry, to contemplate the advent of a new-comer without overwhelming financial anxiety. It has been decided in the case of the wage-earners that it is good policy to relieve the mother of sordid cares when the supreme moment of life-giving is upon her. Now, through the rise of wages and other causes, she is often actually better off than her more highly educated sister. The fact that officials in the Army and Navy and the Church do not air their grievances, but suffer for the most part in silence, is no reason for a judicious Government, alive to the highest interests of our country, to ignore them.

If population is to be encouraged, two things are needful:

1. Some kind of maternity grant.

2. Greater educational facilities provided by the State in view of the fact that, to qualify for the professions, boys and girls must remain far longer *in statu pupillari* than in manual occupations. It is being urged in labour circles that a boy of eighteen should be entitled to full man's wages. The young doctor or lawyer or clergyman cannot look forward to earning anything at all till he is twenty-three or twenty-four, and often then his stipend is more in the nature of pocket-money than a maintenance.

Subalterns can seldom live on their pay, let alone set up a home. The immense rise in necessaries which, in the case of wage-earners, is compensated by higher emoluments, has gravely reduced the purchasing power of salaries already far too meagre, and unless means are promptly found of redressing the balance, the matter will go by default and we shall find ourselves twenty years hence without the very elements in the body-politic which we most need.

Another great and obvious deterrent to the rearing of families is inherent in the housing shortage. This holds good in all classes. Before the War the evil was far-reaching, yet no attempt at a statesmanlike solution was made. It is true that a number of slum areas were cleared. But this too often aggravated the evil, for adequate provision for the evicted was seldom made, and this meant scandalous overcrowding in other directions. Private building enterprise was frequently throttled by taxation and unnecessary and impracticable local bye-laws, while the cost was rendered prohibitive by failing to take account of materials on the spot, and substituting for those which had served for centuries modern brick and slate, quite regardless of the expense of transit.

Now, owing to the enormous rise in wages and materials of all kinds, it is obvious that only by large subventions from the State can leeway be made up, and unless there is to be much waste in the disposal of this subvention, every detail will require the most minute supervision. Women have already been called into council by the central authority, but if on local bodies they were not only consulted but given administrative powers, the saving to the nation's pocket would be great. Moreover, by making them actually responsible, it is probable that

genuinely economic homes would result. At present many of the household arrangements are wasteful in the extreme; this is true not only as regards materials and necessaries, but also as regards that which, after all, is far more economically important, namely, the time and strength of the mistress of the house. Owing to faulty disposition of the floor-space, to the position of the water supply, to the cleaning necessitated where coals have to be brought through the house, hours of needless daily toil result, which might easily have been obviated had the architect been conversant with the occupant's actual needs.

When the day of a working-class mother is considered one cannot but feel that every hour of a woman's time wasted is a loss to the community, for the days are rarely long enough for all she has to do, while her health is a national asset, and that it should be impaired by over-exertion which might have been avoided is a criminal blunder.

Nor is the housing question less acute in higher ranks of society. Here again every obstacle is put in the way of those with families, as we have seen. It would appear as though some enactment were needed by which married people with children should have a prior claim for house-room. This would be economically sound from a national point of view, for it is more important that six citizens should be housed than two, and the more so if both employ the same number of domestics.

This brings us to another point. We are seriously asking ourselves 'How far is it right that the economic force of women should be diverted from production in order to minister to luxury and pleasure in great houses?' And this holds good also of the monster hotels.

There is nothing derogatory in so-called 'service,'

and a modest household which enables the master and mistress to use their gifts in the service of the Commonwealth, whether in business, in positions of public utility, or in the bringing up of children, is more than justified—especially if it be regarded in the light of a training school which shall afterwards enable the pupil to run a home of her own. But it is impossible to justify the hordes of extravagant servants necessitated by the selfish refusal of modern young people to make plans beforehand, or to be bound by them when made. A big country house has now many of the least pleasing characteristics of a caravanserai hotel—guests arrive and depart without notice, with no regard to the hours of meals or the trouble to which they put the household. The advent of motors has proved a curse to order, and as a result the old bad methods of labour in excess of normal requirements at the docks have had to be adopted; but as this cannot be had at a moment's notice for country houses, it results in extreme pressure at one time, combined with disastrous idleness at others, and this in an atmosphere of luxury and pleasure-seeking which engenders habits forming the worst kind of preparation for the realities of life.

Just as it cannot be regarded as economically sound that stalwart young fellows should waste their manhood's strength behind women's haberdashery counters, so the same thing holds good of a large domestic household, unless the mansion is contributing definitely to the common weal, as so many did, to their honour be it recorded, when they turned them voluntarily into hospitals during the War.

These considerations are often never taken into account. In the rush of life it is difficult to see ourselves in due perspective. During the War, when the majority were reducing their households almost to vanishing point,

in order that as many as possible might be liberated for munitions, hospitals, the land, and other work of national importance, there were in our midst an appreciable number of unpatriotic souls who, despite the servant shortage, maintained their households on the old extravagant basis. In very moderate-sized London dwellings a family of father, mother, one child at home and another returning for holidays, would absorb the whole time of nine or ten servants, merely to save themselves the trouble of rearranging the staff and persuading them to 'do their bit' as patriots.

Such a lack of public spirit brings us appreciably nearer to the rationing of service. It would be most regrettable should it be found necessary to interfere with individual liberty in this direction; but if it is to be avoided, we must rid ourselves once for all of the fallacy that so long as we can pay for labour we have a right to employ any number of citizens we like, quite regardless of whether the work which absorbs them is productive or unproductive.

Such a policy is economically unsound, and should not be tolerated. It creates a class of sybarites both among employers and employed; and is a most provocative challenge to all who do the real work of the world. It is a contributing cause of much of the unrest we deplore. Servants carry into their own homes tales of the reckless extravagance and luxury indulged in by their masters; of high play, horse-play, and worse. These tales never lose in the telling. What wonder that exasperation is produced when, on a single night's entertainment, a sum is expended which would keep two average working-class families for a year or more!

If womanhood is to be the economic force she well might be, she must take these matters seriously and not

revert to the senseless, competitive race for a front seat in Society which she temporarily abandoned during the War.

Her value as an economist has been proved both in the Dominions and in the Motherland. In the former the Women's Auxiliary is the mainstay of Church finance; in the latter the Co-operative Women's Guild is a standing testimony to feminine brains and foresight.

It is of the first importance for the welfare of our country that in the future far more attention should be given to economic questions in the education of our children than in the past. The teaching of arithmetic is of little avail unless it is correlated with practical facts. At present the virtue of thrift, far from being regarded as a root-principle, is in too many cases scoffed at and reprehended by all classes. 'Call him a gentleman?—*Saving*'s what *I* call him!' is a common attitude. People are positively proud of making the money fly—like the miner's wife who informed a visitor complacently, 'Yes, my husband and sons brought £20 into the home last week, but I managed to spend it all!' It was her education which was to blame; the rudiments of true economy had never been impressed on her. Nor are matters likely to improve so long as it is assumed that what is earned in the week may reasonably be spent in a week. There is no doubt that the weekly wage encourages the habit of living from hand to mouth. If it were possible, now that incomes are larger, to pay wages fortnightly, and eventually monthly, it would be a great encouragement to foresight and true economy. It would change the attitude of mind and militate against the practice of spending money before it is received. The introduction of War-saving Certificates has been a step in the right direction, which needs widespread expansion.

If boys of eighteen are to receive men's wages, they

would have no difficulty in laying by sufficient for the first month's housekeeping after they married; and once the principle of 'money in hand' were established, the comfort and security it gives would ensure the continuance of the practice.

It is noteworthy that domestic servants, who receive their emoluments monthly or quarterly, frequently save on a considerable scale, and this nest-egg is invaluable either for helping in furnishing when they marry, or as a provision for old age.

Want of economic training, with its attendant drawbacks, is equally prevalent among the more educated classes; it is a slur on womanhood that this should be so, and is largely the outcome of the last century. Training in housewifery by the mother has degenerated since the days when even great ladies, with a retinue of well-born maidens as well as a posse of serving maids, did not think it beneath them to superintend the production of vegetables and herbs, the rearing of pigs and chickens, the weaving of linen and of wool, the making of cheese and butter, the preserving of fruit, and the concoction of simple household remedies, with a hundred other domestic activities.

It is greatly to be desired that many of these arts should be revived, and in all classes girls should be taught such rudimentary particulars as, for instance, the right proportion of house-rent to income, or the amounts of different kinds of food necessary to secure good health for each individual. Many girls marry without the vaguest notion of how much butter, milk, bread, meat, a human being should consume weekly; or, again, what is the right proportion to spend on dress. Moreover, few maidens in any class are ever taught *how to shop*. True economy is not necessarily saving money, it is rather

laying it out wisely. It is to be feared that Dickens' child-wife, spending a sovereign upon a salmon for her own and her husband's consumption because fish was a cheap form of food, has her counterpart in many homes, and much misery in the first year of married life might be spared had the mother only done her duty by her daughter and 'put her wise' as regards profitable joints, right proportions, and the like.

Home-craft of the sort should not be left to be acquired till a girl is grown up on the chance that she may repair its omission before she marries. It should be an integral part of her education from the earliest years.

We have left the most difficult problem of all to the last. Women through the War have tasted the sweets of an income of their own and an independent sphere. Will this fact tell against marriage? It would be harmful to the race if the most capable women should decide to carry on their professions and to abjure motherhood. Yet if they are fulfilling the highest duty which can fall to the lot of anyone, they are surely entitled to some definite income within their own control. It is galling to have to go even to the most considerate husband for every shilling, and to explain the why and the wherefore of small expenditures, inexplicable to the masculine mind.

Surely the time has come when we should take a leaf out of the book of our French ally and provide a dowry of some kind for daughters, just as we endeavour to start our sons in business. This should be the rule in all classes instead of being confined, as it is at present, to those in comparatively easy circumstances. But though this would ease the situation, it is not sufficient. Marriage is a partnership, and on the economic side both partners have definite economic responsibilities. Roughly speak-

ing, it is the husband's part to provide the income, the wife's no less onerous responsibility, by wise foresight and judicious governance, to see that it is laid out to the best advantage. It ought to be possible to arrive at an understanding as regards the proportion at the wife's disposal. This might even have a statutory basis. Nothing militates more against good management than an injunction to 'spend as little as you can,' and where this is the attitude it often means small luxuries for one partner, while the other is scraping and saving, going without things which are really needed. The house accounts are the wife's affair. The general expenditure should be carefully scrutinised by husband and wife together; a budget for the ensuing year should be drawn up, the proportion at the wife's disposal being clearly defined, and so long as she loyally observes the compact the less the man interferes the better. It is an axiom in business that it does not pay to 'job a capable employé in the mouth.' A woman will never put forth her best powers if she feels she is not trusted.

The picture of the true wifely economist drawn by the wise mother of the king of old stands for all time. Can we better it?

Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no lack of gain.

She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchant-ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household and their task to her maidens.

She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength and maketh strong her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is profitable; her lamp goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.

She spreadeth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh for herself carpets of tapestry; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh linen garments and selleth them, and delivereth girdles to the merchants.

Strength and dignity are her clothing; and she laugheth at the time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and the law of kindness is on her tongue.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her blessèd; her husband also, and he praiseth her saying:

'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!'

Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised.

CHAPTER III: WOMANHOOD AS A SOCIAL FORCE

'Be always doing something serviceable to mankind: and let this constant generosity be your only pleasure, not forgetting in the meantime a due regard to the Deity.'—*Marcus Aurelius.*

'Be useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still—
Kindness, good parts, great places are the way
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,
And meet them there!—All worldly joys go less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.'

George Herbert.

The social sway of women has been a factor in national life from very early times. The part of the man was to hunt and fish and shoot for the provision of food, to cultivate the land, to build the family dwelling, and, above all, to defend the hearth by force of arms; while to the woman fell the governance of the home, with its thousand and one activities, and the organising of social life in all its phases.

With the development of civilisation, the part played by women in this respect became ever more important. We find the destinies of empires swayed by the influence of a Cleopatra before the Christian era. The dignity and purity of home and public life alike owed infinitely much to the Roman matrons, under the Republic in its prime; and in our own land we find our ancestresses, Saxon, whether by birth or marriage, Bertha and Ethelburga, potent factors for raising the whole tone of civilisation in backward kingdoms, as well as for introducing Christianity into regions hitherto heathen.

In the age of chivalry fair ladies did much to maintain high ideals in social life. Great queens like Eleanor and Philippa of England habitually accompanied their lords on their travel, however arduous the journeys. They braved every discomfort and risk in order to preserve the traditions of the family, as the birthplaces of their children testify. To Philippa in addition we owe the introduction of the Flemish method of weaving—a boon to the whole community. Scattered throughout the length and breadth of our land were institutions, presided over frequently by ladies of royal birth, which formed centres for social development even more important than the castles and halls. We are wont to regard the convents and abbeys chiefly from the religious standpoint, but their social value was also incalculable. They were at one time the hospitals, the schools, the training seminaries, the agricultural colleges for rich and poor alike. Moreover, art was not forgotten. The most artistic embroideries and delicate illuminations owed their genesis to conventual teachers, while the father of English poets, Cædmon, would never have emerged from oblivion but for the influence of Abbess Hilda.

Nor does this exhaust the beneficent social activities of these centres. Hospitality was one of their chief functions. In early days, when inns were either non-existent or both scarce and squalid, all travellers looked on the monasteries or abbeys as their natural halting-places, where they were sure of a welcome and the best entertainment the house could afford according to their degree. In those days there was constant movement both within our own islands and in foreign parts. Kings and queens were often on progress; great lords moved from one property to another, and they carried with them a great train of attendants, maids of honour, knights

and squires, men-at-arms, minstrels, serving-men, cooks, farriers, armourers, so that the Lady Abbess of long ago was faced with social responsibilities before which even the most princely entertainment of the present day pales. Her influence was far-reaching. She acted as a channel of information between successive parties of guests in a day when communication by letter was slow and not always safe. She was often highly educated, and her opinion was valued in matters of State as well as in religion, and she shared with the great châtelaines the forming of the character of noble maidens committed to her care. The debt our country owes to these able women in countless instances is often forgotten; for attention has been focused on the comparatively small number of failures, many of which were deliberately exaggerated or even invented by way of justification for the cupidity of a sacrilegious king and his courtiers.

But the sphere in which women have held practically undisputed sway throughout our history is the sphere of so-called society, where, in ancestral homes, great ladies have largely set the tone and fixed the standard for morals and manners, and have also influenced diplomacy and politics and wielded powers none the less potent because they were intangible. What a famous bishop was wont to term 'the law of indirectness' is often as effective a weapon as the boomerang, and in the *salons* of famous hostesses for at least four centuries the fate of peoples has often been decided. Within the last ten years matters have altered. Bridge, theatre parties, music halls, jazz dances, have played havoc with the dignified *salons* of the past. Those who should have been our leaders in social affairs, who should have been the arbiters and set the tone, have largely abdicated; and we may well ask ourselves: 'Is it in the fundamental interests of the com-

mon weal that liberty should degenerate into licence, and every form of vulgar extravagance in dress, deportment, and manners be condoned, so long as it emanates from a certain section ?'

Is it not time, for the sake of our country, that we should make a concerted effort to restrain the frankly anarchical spirit which has recently invaded dress, amusements, and the general conduct of life ? Why should we allow the minority—possibly quite a small minority—to degrade the habits of our young people, and substitute for the dignified self-control of the past the decadent conditions which followed on the heels of the French Revolution ? The social force of womanhood is incalculable, if only it is consolidated by concerted action.

Much of what we deplore is the result of ignorance. Those who adopt foolish and provocative dress are few of them calculatingly vicious. Equivocal situations are often the result of heedlessness, and a false step once made is hard to retrieve. Then, again, extravagance is obviously promoted by the large space allotted to advertisements of women's dress in some of our leading papers, to say nothing of the extreme indelicacy of illustrating underwear in journals intended for general reading.

Now that women are regarded as responsible members of the nation, it is a poor compliment to them to assume that a quarter or a fifth part of a newspaper must be given up to clothes, as though that was the space they occupied in the feminine mind. At a moment when we are told that as patriots we should minimise our personal expenses, it is surely unworthy and impolitic to allow such traps to be baited for the weak ! There should be a close time for clothes advertisements. Perhaps an orgy of them might be permitted for a week at the beginning

of each of the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Then shoppers would be encouraged to set themselves up for three months at a time, and not spend unnecessarily, golden hours of a life already too short, on what is after all a mere accessory, *not* life itself. As a young married woman pathetically exclaimed, 'Clothes take so long to buy, one never seems to have time to wear them.'

It is true there is nothing virtuous in dowdiness, and the duty of beauty needs emphasising for some of our saintliest souls. It is not a matter of unimportance whether or no we make the sacred cause we represent unattractive by personal negligence. It is to be remembered that the King's daughter is not only 'all glorious within,' but 'her clothing is of wrought gold'; and of our Pattern it is recorded that 'He is chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.' But everything should be proportioned, and becoming and appropriate attire is to be achieved with a very moderate expenditure both of time and money, once the principle is conceded.

It is clearly unthinkable that our food-supply should be jeopardised that we may flaunt in smart costumes. Now, as of old, the body is more than raiment; and in the need for increased production which is so urgently pressed upon us, it would surely be reasonable to diminish the teeming drapers' and milliners' shops, that the land might receive its due.

The economic aspect of the dress problem is no new one, for we find a Bishop of Chichester, in 1441, rebuking a prioress of noble birth at Easebourne Priory for the very costly fur trimmings in which she indulged. He characterises them as 'superfluous to her condition,' and bids her dispose of them to discharge the debts of her house.

As regards some of the most vital social questions of the day, such as housing, baby welfare, and maternity care, women are already in the forefront. Their action has undoubtedly been a potent factor in the decrease of the infant death-rate, and if their administrative capacity only receives a free hand as regards housing and maternity benefits, there is every reason to hope that these two great problems, on which social advance largely depends, may profit equally by their judicious consideration.

It is not yet clear that in determining the education of girls, the experience of the girls of the past, the wives and mothers of the future, will be adequately used. A Ministress of Education is just as urgently needed as a Minister, and on all Education Committees it would be advisable that women should sit in equal numbers with men.

The capacities of the girlhood of our country, from the lowest to the highest, have never yet received the sympathetic consideration they deserved. 'Woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse.' The wisest of men, never having been a girl himself, is at sea as regards a hundred and one tendencies which should be taken into account in deciding the curriculum best suited to so delicate an organism. The result of our elementary education so far is in many cases frankly tragic. It does not prepare girls to play their parts as wives and mothers; it sends them out after seven or eight years moderately versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with possibly a smattering of history, singing, and other subjects, and very imperfectly instructed in needlework. It is only in exceptional cases that the most important object of all has been attained, and that they leave school with a desire deeply implanted in their bosoms to delve yet deeper into the book of knowledge. Yet 'the seeking

soul' is the normal characteristic of childhood. Most little ones begin by 'wanting to know'; indeed their incessant questions are apt to tax the patience of their elders. Is there not something wrong in our methods if education, instead of drawing out (its true meaning), actually stifles the desire for knowledge?

Surely it is time we adopted the plans so fruitfully applied by Miss Charlotte Mason in the Parents' Union, by which learning becomes to children a constant unfolding of fresh wonders to which they look forward with most eager anticipation! These same plans are now being tested in a few elementary schools with marked success. It is to be hoped that they will become national, and that the next generation will leave school determined to carry on some branch of study and regarding the world of books as one in which friendship is always awaiting them, however uncongenial may be the human intercourse to which they are restricted.

It has appeared advisable to dwell on some of the blunders of the past, not from any pessimistic outlook, but because the material for building up a better England is so promising, it would be pathetic were we to fail for lack of practical perception. The War has taught us what splendid qualities are inherent in boys and girls alike, of all classes, under the ægis of discipline, foresight, and co-operation. It has also taught us that without these three essentials many dangers beset their paths.

The social force of women from highest to lowest cannot be better employed, above and beyond the material improvements alluded to above, than in securing for all, intellectual, musical, artistic opportunity which shall tend to brighten and irradiate the whole of life. In towns, though much still remains to be done, a hundred agencies are already at work. In the country, the Women's

Institutes have made an admirable beginning, and should be supported in every way; but they can only accomplish a tithe of what is needed to give back to rural life the colour and brightness it possessed in days of old. It is only within the last century that these have disappeared; and that disappearance is largely due to failure on the part of those who should have been leaders to see where their primary duty lay.

We must admit that women are largely to blame for this. Even in early Victorian days the squire's wife and daughters were content with a few weeks' absence in London or elsewhere, and spent the bulk of their lives among their own people, sharing their joys and sorrows, developing interests in common and organising many activities which contributed to the welfare of all. But during the last quarter of a century matters have changed. Unrest has infected the young people. Because they dislike being tied, although at any rate a part of their father's income is drawn from the land, they have felt little obligation towards their humbler neighbours, and have considered themselves justified in seeking both interest and recreation elsewhere. This has meant increasing dullness and dreariness on the country-side, and has fostered a natural spirit of resentment, akin to that created by absenteeism in Ireland, against those who appear in the eyes of the villagers to take much and give little. It is not charity they want, but friendship. Cheques are a poor substitute for personal service. A gift may be spoilt by remoteness. The personal touch is essential; as the poet has it,

> Not what we give, but what we share,
> For the gift without the giver is bare.

We know that fortunately the oblivion to obvious

duties is by no means universal. There are up and down our country-sides still shining examples of what the 'big house' may be to the neighbourhood, gentle and simple alike. But, as usual, an institution is judged by its worst specimens; the innocent suffer for the guilty; and it is to be feared that unless the latter can be brought to reform, an influence which has been potent for good throughout the centuries may be swept away in obedience to democratic demands. In the interests of democracy itself, this disaster should be averted, for where 'the hall' takes its destined place in the life of the village it is capable of rendering incalculable service in all the new developments now being initiated. Only in the future it must be regarded by the many, instead of by the few, not in the light of a possession, but a trust. Its occupants must no longer consider that its primary purpose is to serve as a centre of pleasure and amusement to a posse of idle people, who, having spent the best part of the summer in dancing, theatre-going, racing, card-playing, and the like, come down to the country in search of fresh stimulus to enjoyment in the shape of shooting, fishing, and hunting. However legitimate as a relaxation, sport ceases to be defensible when it becomes the business of life, and the bitter criticisms of the workers on such drones are only too well deserved.

There is a splendid future before the country-houses if they will only take themselves seriously and play the part in the resurrection of the nation for which they are obviously designed. The sense of responsibility re-emerged during the War when one stately home after another turned itself voluntarily into a hospital. Women bearing some of the proudest names in history as hostess-commandants turned all their organising talent to provision for the comfort and solace of our wounded heroes, while their young daughters thought no manual labour

too menial which could contribute to the welfare of those who had suffered so much.

Let the great houses but continue to count as they counted during the War, and the desirability of maintaining them will be recognised by all. It is of vital importance that their owners should not allow the crucial moment to pass. The opportunity is great. Many of the ideals on which we believe the welfare of our country depends are at stake, not because the majority are anarchists and revolutionaries, but because no one takes the trouble to put into their hands, in a form which appeals to them, the information which will enable them to grasp the magnitude of the gulf into which extremists would persuade them to plunge.

Meanwhile the lack of interest and stimulus in rural centres renders them a ready prey to agitators. Life is so dull, they say, 'Anything for a change.' And the pathos of the situation lies in the fact that all around these very centres cluster the elements of an existence full of vitality and charm, if only someone will take the trouble to organise it. Those who have done so can testify to the ready response elicited, and also to the latent talent lurking even among the inhabitants of remote upland hamlets.

There are countless directions in which the Big House may be a centre of light and leading for its less fortunate neighbours. Foremost among them is the revival of the old pageants, once such a feature of Britain, and for which the instinct is not dead, but dormant. This has been proved recently by the avidity with which the musical War and Peace masques have been taken up and performed in hundreds of centres. There is a movement on foot to send professional theatrical troupes touring through the villages. Surely it would be far better to train the

inhabitants to provide their own entertainment. This has many advantages. The meeting of high and low for rehearsals effectively levels distinctions or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that it uplifts all in a generous competition as to who can contribute most to the body politic. The common study of good music, the attempt adequately to set forth great ideas, the subordination of self in the service of the community, form precious links, and the qualities of perseverance, patience, and insight which go to make a successful performance, are none the less valuable because they are fostered indirectly. It is to be hoped that those who organise such undertakings will not be afraid of aiming high. There is not the smallest excuse for descending to artificial or stupidly vulgar entertainments, for noble conceptions have proved their power to attract beyond a doubt. A time may come when each county will have a series of such musical masques for performance by the villagers, embodying the chief historical events within its boundaries.

It is found that open-air performances in the setting of fine old trees in the Hall garden are specially welcomed.

These same gardens should form a school of horticulture for the youth of the parish. Few villagers have yet been fully initiated into the freedom of the garden. In many cases dull potatoes and cabbages form their staple food, just for want of the helpful suggestions as regards choice and culture, which the squire's trained head gardener can supply. It is possible completely to revolutionise the monotonous fare in cottages by a judiciously arranged schedule of prizes in a country flower-show. The interest taken in the growing of unaccustomed dainties is exhilarating, while the culture of flowers under skilled advice adds a joy to life which garden-lovers know is quite independent of the size of the plot. For all this

the Hall garden forms an admirable object-lesson, and periodical visits to it for ocular demonstration and advice, given as one neighbour to another, will stimulate both energy and ambition.

The lady at the Hall and her daughters may be of incalculable service to those engaged on the land, whether farmers or labourers, and their families, by bringing to their doors information as regards new methods and modern developments. In many cases, while the major operations may be satisfactorily and economically carried out, the minor activities (mostly falling to the share of the women) are often far less productive than they might be for want of up-to-date instruction. Yet the wife of a farmer or labourer, with her closely-packed day, cannot find time to go off to lectures at the county town, though one at the Hall would be warmly welcomed.

The enormous number of eggs imported from foreign sources before the War was a scathing reproach to our national housekeeping. The Egg and Poultry Union has done much to remedy this, but its beneficent activities need to be far more widely known, and its co-operative principles carried into the marketing of fruit, vegetables, honey, and the like.

The revival of village industries would add greatly to the interest of rural life. The initiative of the Hall would get over the preliminary difficulties such as the securing of tuition and materials. Wood-carving, brass-work, basket-weaving, toy-making, the manufacture of rugs, form delightful occupations for winter evenings, and if those employed in the quieter pursuits were gathered together and a bright story read aloud, varied by songs, we should have less of the loafing after dark which is often the first step to evil.

The patronal festival and village feast should be

made an outstanding event, the religious basis being emphasised to give a high tone to all the revelry. Each parish should have its own appropriate masque for that day, centering round the patron saint.

A lending library, with special regard to books bearing on the history of the county, its churches, its famous men, and its life generally in bygone centuries, would be greatly appreciated. The people of to-day are keenly interested in those who went before them, but they seldom have any opportunity of satisfying this interest. They listen with rapt attention to addresses on such subjects.

But the activities of the Hall should not stop short at the village. They should cover a wider field. A special blessing rests on the entertainment of guests who cannot ask us again.

Far more pains should be taken to give such associations as the Mothers' Union, G.F.S., Young Women's Christian Association, Co-operative Women's Guild, and other women's associations, the joy of a happy afternoon in a beautiful garden, while cricket matches for men and boys promote good fellowship and are greatly appreciated. But beyond these there are three classes of men and women whose position in country districts is often very isolated and who would do far better work if they met with more sympathy and encouragement, viz., elementary teachers, organists, and country clergy. For all three the big houses might be most valuable rallying grounds.

Elementary school teachers frequently find no kindred souls among the parents of their pupils; their status is somewhat nebulous, they have little opportunity of meeting and exchanging ideas with others engaged in the same important task. Yet on their ability to inspire the citizens of the future the progress of the Empire depends.

If from time to time they were invited from several surrounding parishes to the Hall, on a Saturday afternoon, as honoured guests, given the opportunity of meeting one another, playing tennis and croquet (it is to be remembered many of them are quite young), and a simple tea in summer; while in winter an interesting address might take the place of games—they would go back to their schools refreshed by contact with fellow-workers and encouraged by the sense that their hosts fully appreciated the dignity of the profession they represent. It would not be without its influence, too, on their status in the eyes of children and parents.

The same thing holds good of the organists, to whom we owe so much for their contribution to our worship. As a rule, the pay allotted to them is quite inadequate. Three-quarters of their service may be reckoned as voluntary; yet they seldom receive any social recognition in virtue of their office.

Possibly, as in many parishes the schoolmaster and organist are one, a combined gathering at stated intervals of both organists and teachers might be congenial. Anyhow, it is high time that those of us who happen to inhabit large houses with beautiful gardens, bethink ourselves how we can pay back to those less fortunate something of what we have received in such a large measure, not in any spirit of patronage, but with a genuine desire to strengthen the hands of these hard-working public servants to whom the nation owes so much.

As regards the third section, the country clergy, far greater efforts ought to be made to give them a share intellectually in whatever advantages the big house affords. The run of a good library, the loan of the latest book, is not always offered through sheer thoughtlessness. Again, little attempt is made to give them the relaxation

of congenial society in a form which their low stipends makes financially acceptable. A dinner-party often means expense for transit, but luncheon in these days of bicycles *is* possible, and experience proves that a most interesting party may be gathered from different parts of the county at mid-day, which is a real refreshment to any clergy among the guests, or picnics at convenient centres may be arranged. There is yet another development for which the big house is specially adapted. It is scarcely realised that for many hard-working clergy holidays are a great difficulty ; yet how can they preserve freshness and vigour for their sacred task if the machine is always in action ? It is much to be desired that the principle of rest-weeks for clergy should be widely adopted. Often they can get away from Monday to Saturday, as this does not involve finding a substitute, and even those few days' complete change, in the company of other clergy with whom they can gain a larger outlook and discuss difficulties which, if shared, assume their due proportions, may be an almost unthinkable refreshment to body, soul, and spirit. There is no doubt that the hostess will be amply compensated for any trouble to herself by the physical improvement in her guests, and by the added restfulness the slackening of the bow affords.

These are only a few of the possibilities open to the big house as a social force. Circumstances have changed ; and if their owners cling to all the old traditions it may well be that their day is done. But if the châtelaines of the past will seize the immense opportunity of the new conditions, as they did during the War, and make of our historic homes centres for the uplift of the whole community, they may well be crowned by future generations as saviours of their country.

CHAPTER IV: WOMANHOOD AS A SPIRITUAL FORCE

'Quench not the Spirit!'

'A Duty, an absolute Duty, governs man from the cradle upwards!—growing with his growth, and accompanying him to the tomb; a Duty towards his brothers as well as to himself; a Duty towards his Country, towards Humanity, and, above all, towards the Church; the Church which, rightly understood, is but the home of the Universal Family; the great city wherein dwells Christ, at once Priest, King, and Ruler of the world!'—*Lamennais.*

'And so on us, at whiles, it falls to claim
Powers that we dread, or dare some forward part;
Nor must we shrink as cravens from the blame
Of pride in common eyes, or purpose deep;
But with pure thoughts look up to God and keep
Our secret in our heart.'

Newman.

The spiritual forces embodied in womanhood have not for centuries past been used as they might have been in the service of the community. Looking back through the ages we find that from early times onward the capacity of women to act as channels for the transmission of the Message of the Holy Ghost was both recognised and welcomed. Deborah is both a prophetess and a leader. Without her support Baruch declines to go to war. The Psalmist, in his wonderful ascension poem, refers exultantly to the great company of preachers, to whom the Lord gave the Word; and though it is not brought out in Miles Coverdale's translation (the Prayer-book version which we use), the Hebrew word for preacher is feminine. Anna

the Prophetess is found in the Temple; Phoebe is a Deaconess with a recognised office; Priscilla instructs Apollos further in the faith, though he was already 'an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.' Through the ministrations of Lois and Eunice the Church gains a notable Bishop in Timothy, the beloved of St. Paul. Holy women of noble birth, both in Italy and elsewhere, made their homes the recognised centres for Church life and activities. They were habitually taken into counsel by the Fathers, as is proved by their writings. They witnessed to the death with their brothers and husbands and shared with them the martyr's honour, so that their blood became the seed of the Church.

Far from the influence of women in spiritual matters being resented or deprecated in early days, they were regarded as potent means to the conversion of heathen lands to Christ. At least two of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy owe their Christianity to women. Bertha brought the light of the Gospel to the kingdom of Kent, and her daughter, Ethelburga, to Northumbria.

There is still extant the beautiful letter of Gregory the Great, affectionately known in Britain as 'Our Father Gregory who gave us Baptism,' to Queen Bertha, written in 601. He gently rebukes her for having been so tardy in christianising the kingdom of Kent. He evidently does not understand how difficult had been the position of the girl-wife as almost the only Christian in the midst of heathen surroundings; how lonely must have been her worship with her chaplain and two or three attendants while her husband and children did homage to their gods in the Temple hard by. But Gregory graciously assures her that what she has at last done and her support of St. Augustine, has made the Romans pray for her long life, and has excited interest even in Constantinople. He

enjoins her to take Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, as her model, and make up for past neglect by greater zeal in regard to the Mission.

Ethelburga and her chaplain Paulinus may well be termed the founders of the Northumbrian Church. Her husband Edwin, after months of hesitation, decided, with a large band of his nobles, to embrace Christianity, and on Easter Eve, 627, the great baptismal service took place which sealed Northumbria for Christ, whilst among those on whom the sacrament was conferred was a girl of fourteen, destined in the future to become the greatest spiritual force to which womanhood has attained in England—Hilda, the great-niece of the King, afterwards Abbess of the first important conventual institution for women in England.

It is recorded of her that 'the grace of this sacrament she always preserved without spot; and from the moment she became a member of the kingdom of God, the obligations and happiness of this great spiritual dignity engrossed her whole soul.' She little dreamed of the immense responsibility to be laid upon her. Till the age of thirty-three 'she lived very nobly in the secular habit.' Then but for Aidan she would have been lost to England, for she and her sister, Hereswid, Queen of East Anglia, purposed devoting themselves to the religious life at Chelles in France. But Aidan, divining her exceptional gifts, forbade her departure, and urged her to found and develop the conventual system in the north of England. The whole tale of Hilda's life is of thrilling interest. She had a genius for the liberation of spiritual force. She was quick to detect it wherever it existed, however humble the casket in which it was enshrined. As we have seen, but for her the shepherd-poet Cædmon, to whom we owe the first English hymns, would have remained unknown.

It is not always realised that the great Abbey of Whitby was a double foundation both for men and women. Over it Hilda presided for nearly a quarter of a century. 'Her prudence was so great, that not only meaner men in their need, but sometimes even kings and princes sought and received her counsel.' To Whitby bishops repaired for ordinands trained by Hilda, and from these candidates no fewer than five bishops emerged, one of them being the renowned Wilfrid. Under her roof the famous Synod took place in 664, and she took part in the deliberations.

Nor, though Hilda was the greatest of the abbesses, was she by any means the only one of importance. Throughout the country similar positions were held by royal or noble ladies, many of whom exerted widespread spiritual influence, while saints like Juliana of Norwich have left their impress not only on contemporaries, but, through their writings, on succeeding generations.

Our queens regnant have (with one exception) made substantial contributions to the spiritual life of the nation. It was by command of Elizabeth that the Bible was translated into Welsh; Queen Anne surrendered the large income of the firstfruits to the clergy, whence the name of the fund, 'Queen Anne's Bounty,' while the influence exerted by the late Queen of blessed memory, Victoria, is too fresh in the minds of all to need emphasis here. They trod nobly in the steps of their great ancestress Margaret of Scotland, herself a great-niece of Edward the Confessor, who after her marriage with King Malcolm lifted religion in Scotland on to a higher level.

It has seemed advisable to dwell on these examples of the past because there is a tendency in some quarters to regard spiritual activities on the part of women, and their recognition as speakers and leaders, in the light of a new departure, whereas it is, in fact, merely a return to

customs prevailing in earlier and less sophisticated days. Why women should not only have failed to keep pace with the general advance, but should have actually dropped out of official service to the Church, it is difficult to understand. Apparently, when, by the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, the positions many of them had filled so nobly disappeared, no other method was evolved by which their services could be retained. For three and a half centuries this state of affairs has endured, and it is only within our own recollection that a small beginning has been made once more to use the gifts of the daughters of the Church.

It is indeed time that the whole question should receive sympathetic and far-sighted consideration by our ecclesiastical leaders. At present more than half of the baptised members of the Church are ineligible for positions where their gifts could be utilised to the full. Is it any wonder that clergy are over-taxed, that congregations dwindle, that the numbers on our communicants rolls and of our Confirmation candidates leave much to be desired, while the failure of the Church to appeal to the wage-earners as a whole is deplored by us all ? And the tragic element is this : that the lack is of our own creating. The material for remedying it is all there, ready and willing. Nay, more, in many a woman's heart burns the Apostle's compelling fire, ' Necessity is laid upon me ; yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.' It is to be remembered that the Church makes no distinction between daughters and sons. She claims from each the same whole-hearted allegiance ; she lays on both the same inspiring pledge that they will *manfully* fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil. Sons are free to fulfil this vow as the Spirit moves them. For daughters with an equal vocation, as a rule, so far no definite official position

of responsibility is available in our own country, though in mission stations the case is different. It is true that a few become heads of communities or sisterhoods, and a small number have been admitted as deaconesses. But neither of these give full scope to feminine powers, and the contrast between the service open to deacons and deaconesses shows how different is the estimate of the Church of their functions.

The result is what might be expected. You cannot make an expert organist out of a one-armed man, however able. Without two hands to draw out its sweetness and strength the instrument will never rise to the full height of its possibilities. And until the services of Church-women are better organised and co-ordinated, till hampering and needless restrictions are removed, we cannot expect the advance for which we have all been praying.

Our present rules as regards the ministrations of women are curiously inconsistent. For instance, a woman may train the choir and Sunday by Sunday at the organ influence the congregation by the subtle spell of music, entirely at her own discretion; but she may not relieve the tired voice of the incumbent who is taking many services single-handed, by reading the lessons appointed for the day, where no divergence from rule is possible.

As a diocesan Messenger she may in some dioceses address women and children in Church; but should any men wish to attend, the congregation must adjourn to the school or the open air. It seems strange, as a leading rural dean remarked, that a woman's ministrations should be regarded as unsuitable in any Lady Chapel, but so it is. Many of us hope that the great Report on 'The Ministry of Women' will prove to be a veritable Women's Charter, and that the administrative action taken as a result of it will open new fields of fruitful activity

for Churchwomen. It is obviously undesirable that dioceses should act independently. The matter is one for the whole Church. Only it is much to be hoped that further delay may be averted. For the loss will be great if the gifts of able women are welcomed in all kinds of secular positions of responsibility, while the Church of which many of them are such loyal adherents can only use them in subordinate and comparatively unimportant posts.

It should be clearly understood that there is no desire on the part of Churchwomen to usurp prerogatives belonging to others. Their whole concern is not to lay themselves open to the charge of resisting the Holy Ghost, by failing to exercise gifts conferred at Confirmation. 'Ghostly strength' is not given for our own selfish delectation; we hoard it at our peril. It is our bounden duty to pass it on. By what method this may most fitly be carried out, it lies with the Church to decide; only it is essential as a condition that the obligation to use the gift be not called in question, but that this great spiritual force be directed into the right channels.

Now in the minds of many there is a sense that the public ministrations of women raise a number of complex problems which must be thoroughly threshed out and will take long to solve. But there is a sphere in which it would appear that the services of women might be used with untold advantage to the girlhood of our country, and about which it is difficult to see where controversy could possibly arise.

Year by year thousands of maidens are brought to Confirmation. Surely no more touching sight can be witnessed than these bands of young neophytes in virginal white, vowing their young lives to the Highest. It should be a moment full of hopefulness for all concerned, and

yet underlying it is the poignant reflection, piercing our hearts like a sword: 'How many of these, so full of high aspirations and good resolutions now, will be found five years hence to have remained staunch to their vows?' The question has been put to many an earnest priest who sorrowfully admits that if even one-third have not fallen away there is cause for profound thankfulness. The voice of the Master rings down the ages, accusing our methods, and giving pause to every member of the sacred body. 'Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?' Is there no remedy for this ever-recurring tragedy of souls? Must we acquiesce in the loss to our ranks year by year of those who should be our chiefest strength? Can any cause be assigned for so pitiful a descent from heights once attained? Is not the answer all too plain, so that they who run may read? 'These have *no root*; which for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away.'

We need to face the situation, however painful it may be. The religious foundation, especially in the educated homes of England, has not been well and truly laid during the last quarter of a century, as it was previously. Obviously there has always been a section of society which 'cared for none of these things.' It is not with these we are concerned. But amongst professing Church-people it is generally recognised that daughters are less well instructed in the Bible, in the Faith, in all that pertains to spiritual life, than their mothers were, and immeasurably less than their grandmothers. And it is a grave consideration that the clergy to whom they are brought for instruction testify that frequently there is little or no foundation in the soul of the educated girl on which the spiritual structure may be built up. Often she is far more ignorant of the truths of religion than her humbler sister who in the G.F.S. or Y.W.C.A., Sunday

school, Bible classes, and the like has received regular instruction. It may be that a mother's own convictions are too nebulous to enable her to point the way to her daughter. The Higher Criticism has unsettled her. She has not been intellectually capable of piercing through the cloud of doubt. She does not know *what* to teach, and so adopts the fatal policy of masterly inactivity. How is it possible for the most devoted priest to make up in a few short weeks for the neglect of years? There is another point to consider. Confirmation synchronises for a girl with the approach of womanhood, when she will be faced with a thousand and one problems, moral, spiritual, and practical, connected with a side of life on which she would find it impossible to speak openly to anyone but a woman. Yet for want of wise counsel how many have made shipwreck! It is idle to say that these are matters for the girl's own mother. In nine cases out of ten the mother is the last person to help her daughter in this respect. She does not even recognise it as a duty. And so these young souls are left to flounder, to pick up information from chance acquaintances, to fall a prey to the machinations of a certain section of women whose aim it is to stir up sex-antagonism and to rob the most sacred of human relations of all its nobility and beauty. In the indignant words of a modern poet:

What an abyss for woman! Lo, what a depth to fall!
She who might be the helper, angel, and guide of all!
Woe unto those who did it, the elder women who taught
English girls base lessons, poisoning soul and thought!
Woe unto those who, knowing nothing of love or of man,
First the pitiful story of wrong and deceit began;
These, these most, these only, have changed the current of life

To a torrent of blood-red waters and changed love's joy
to a strife :
Mixing their base ambitions, hatred, anger, and greed
With the thoughts of flower-white girlhood, with our
maiden's pure, sweet creed.
What can set right or atone for it ? Nothing, till death's
waves whirl
Round the throat of a woman who lies to the soul of a
girl !

'These have no root.' What is the cause ? Is it not that the time of preparation for Confirmation is among ourselves far too short ? We were told over and over again at the Pan-Anglican Congress that 'Confirmation is the layman's ordination.' If so, how can we feel that a few weeks are sufficient to achieve all that is needed? In other countries a year, or even two years, is the period of instruction given. It would appear that here accredited Churchwomen might be of infinite assistance to their younger sisters in the Faith. They would not, it need hardly be said, in any way infringe on the definite, doctrinal, and spiritual preparation which only a priest can give. This would continue exactly as it does now. But, in addition, for a year before they become full members of our Church, educated girls would be commended to the care of some able and godly woman in the diocese, duly appointed by the Bishop, whose charge it would be during that time to direct their reading, to arrange classes and courses of addresses for them, to come into personal touch with each one, and to give her the help and guidance, as regards the many problems of budding womanhood, which she so sorely needs. If in every diocese there were such a band of women, preferably married and living in the world, so that they had personal knowledge of

actualities, many a girl would be thankful for such an adviser; and the friendship then formed would be of untold advantage in case of subsequent difficulties. Half the catastrophes which have occurred might have been averted had the girl possessed some tried and trusted friend, whom she knew would be actuated purely by a desire for her highest welfare in any counsel that she gave. To such a one she would go before evil had developed.

One of the crying needs is that girls of the leisured classes should have a course of addresses on the Ten Commandments, setting forth as regards each one the modern application. Many a one, as she hears them Sunday by Sunday, brushes them aside with the mental ejaculation: '*I* shall never be tempted to break that command.' Such a course would bring in the lessons of the Seventh Commandment naturally, and afford the opportunity for special advice and warning without giving the topic undue prominence. The positive inferences contained in the Decalogue are often ignored, as, for example, in the Fourth. Attention is concentrated on the injunction to keep holy the Sabbath, but the no less stringent injunction *to all classes* to labour for the other six days is frequently overlooked.

Similarly the Gospel correlatives of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth, illustrated by the aphorism 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' come home with special appeal to a young and ardent soul. 'A new Commandment I give unto you that ye love' (Sixth). 'See that ye love one another *with a pure heart fervently*' (Seventh). 'Owe no man anything but to love one another' (Eighth). These positives reveal that a sin can only be finally forsaken when the corresponding virtue is exercised in obedience to the higher Law of Christ.

Such a scheme as is outlined above, if it were generally

adopted, should be potent for deepening the spiritual life of those for whom it is designed. It should also secure for the Church the services of many who, for want of a clearly indicated sphere, drift into other activities. From it should surely eventuate a band of *competent* Sunday school teachers, one of our most crying needs. Personal service in this direction would grow out of it naturally.

There is another educational opportunity which might be specially delegated to the powers of Churchwomen. In connection with Mr. Fisher's scheme there are to be established in various centres secondary schools which pupils from a distance will attend from Monday to Friday. The status of religious instruction in these schools is at present under debate. But should some such schools be under the ægis of the Church, there is sure to be a large number also which will be at best undenominational. For these it is all-important that residential Church hostels shall be provided where the atmosphere will carry on the influence under which the children have been brought up. We do not believe in a mere Sunday religion. God should permeate the whole of life. The establishment and supervision of such hostels should appeal to all Churchwomen.

But this does not exhaust possibilities. Why should not educated Churchwomen take a far greater share than in the past in the training of the rising generation in elementary schools? There is ample room for such service. In fact, there is a crying need for it. It is estimated by the Board of Education that to keep up an adequate supply of teachers, nine thousand fresh candidates are needed annually. As a matter of fact, the figures for 1918 were under six thousand—showing a drop of three thousand from those of 1908. The vast majority of these candidates are girls. In 1918 the figures were: boys, 780; girls, 5,087.

The shortage is gravely disquieting. The profession of a teacher is becoming more honourable with every year. It affords a field of service infinite in its possibilities; and it has been suggested that, pending the full organisation of continuation schools, much might be done by high school girls and women graduates to bridge the gulf until a sufficient supply of fresh teachers has been trained. Headmasters of elementary schools have offered their assistance to teach such volunteers how to teach in class.

In the special women's societies, such as the Mothers' Union, Girls' Friendly Society, Young Women's Christian Association, and Women's Help Society, the spiritual opportunity is so well known and so clearly defined that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here. We are far from having exhausted its possibilities; with every year fresh openings arise. Fellowship is strengthened; the joy of being permitted to minister to them is greater; links are cemented, and it may well be that through such organisations the tragedy which has been enacted in Russia may be averted. In these bodies and kindred societies the sense that we *are* members one of another is no mere figure of speech.

As Messengers and Pilgrims, souls come closely in touch, and quietly and gradually a spiritual force is growing up which links womanhood in indissoluble bonds, and will in due course do much to mould the next generation. In Retreats and Quiet Days the power of collective prayer, and the wonderful sense of fellowship under the One Master, are more and more developed, and, as of old, men wonder whereunto this shall grow.

But perhaps one of the most hopeful elements of all is that embodied in the holiday camps of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The women who captain the latter

association are revolutionising the whole outlook, alike of Brownies and their seniors. They are performing a truly Christlike work. Like their Master, they empty themselves that they may fill others. But beyond the responsibilities of these devoted leaders, there is opportunity for all Churchwomen who possess a coachhouse or barn and a garden or meadow. At Easter, Whitsun, and in August, thousands of Scouts and Guides desire to camp. They cater for themselves, and with the help of straw or new-mown grass, make their own beds. The trouble to the hostess is really infinitesimal. Yet the spiritual opportunity is often great. To begin with, the hospitality is deeply appreciated; the boys or girls, as the case may be, regard it as practical Christianity; and as a result they are peculiarly open to higher influences. An address or service under the trees is cordially welcomed, while in one such camp the factory girls from one of our great towns joined in family worship, with inspiring hymns, in the old panelled hall of the mansion night after night for the week of their stay, and confided to their captain that of all the varied delights of their day it was the one to which they most looked forward.

It is impossible to set limits to the results of these movements. They promote understanding and dispel false impressions. The eight o'clock breakfast bell and nine o'clock prayer bell every morning were a revelation to this party, who imagined that 'the rich' lay abed habitually till the middle of the day.

Spiritual force awaits liberation in every direction. The appalling experiences of the past five years have rent the veil from many eyes, have driven home the realities, have shown us how trivial are the differences between class and class in comparison with the fundamental fact of our common human nature. They have

aroused in many hearts an indomitable determination to right the wrongs of the past. We have emerged—may we not say so?—with the spiritual sense quickened to see the heavenly vision of what our earth might be. And we count it the highest honour which could fall to the lot of any mortal to have a hand in the resurrection of our country. Angels have rolled away the imprisoning stone. In days of yore the Master used a woman to bear to the waiting world the Message of the living Christ. Is not the command ringing in our ears: 'Ephthatha, be opened!' Shall we not joyously respond, 'Behold the Handmaid of the Lord!'

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